



**WESTERN
PACIFIC
REGIONAL
FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL**

Notice to Fishermen

Hawaii's Bottomfish Fishery Opens October 1, 2007

The main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) bottomfish fishery for the Deep 7 bottomfish (onaga, ehu, gindai, kalekale, opakapaka, lehi, and hapu'upu'u) will open on October 1, 2007. The fishery closed on May 15, 2007 in an effort to end overfishing for these species. During the 2007 closure, long-term management measures were developed and are under review.

When the MHI fishery opens on October 1st, harvest of Deep 7 bottomfish caught by commercial bottomfish fishermen will be monitored and counted towards a Total Allowable Catch (TAC). The TAC has been set at 178,000 lbs. Fishing will be allowed until the TAC is reached or until the proposed 2008 May - August seasonal closure is implemented, whichever comes first. The fishery will likely remain open through the winter holiday season, but may close before then if the TAC is reached. Commercial fishing for bottomfish species other than the Deep 7 will not be affected by the proposed TAC or the 2008 seasonal closure.

When the fishery opens on October 1, the State's new bottomfish restricted fishing areas (BRFAs) will be in effect. Fishermen are reminded that the State's BRFA system has been modified and that there are now 12 BRFAs instead of the 19 originally established in 1998. Maps and coordinates for the 12 BRFAs are posted on the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) website: www.hawaii.gov/dlnr/dar/bottomfishing.htm. If you do not have internet access, contact the DAR office on your island for this information.

The State non-commercial bag limit (five onaga or five ehu, or a combination of five fish of either species, per angler per day) will continue to be in effect. Non-commercial fishing for bottomfish will remain open until the proposed commercial TAC is reached or the proposed 2008 May - August seasonal closure is implemented, whichever comes first. At that time, both commercial and non-commercial fisheries for bottomfish will be closed to fishing for the Deep 7 until the beginning of the next fishing year (September 1, 2008). Non-commercial fishing for bottomfish species other than the Deep 7 will not be affected by the proposed TAC or 2008 seasonal closure.

Additionally, the State bottomfish fishery vessel registration will continue to be in effect. Bottomfish fishermen already participating in the commercial and non-commercial MHI bottomfish fishery should already have their vessels registered. Any fisherman who wishes to participate in the MHI bottomfish fishery must register his vessel with DAR.

State and Federal fisheries agencies are working through their respective rule-making processes to develop the regulations necessary to implement a long-term management program to manage the MHI bottomfish resources, improve commercial reporting and establish a new Federal non-commercial permit and reporting program. Until these changes become effective, current State and Federal regulations relating to MHI bottomfishing continue to apply.

To improve monitoring the status of the MHI bottomfish fishery and the TAC, DLNR/DAR would like to request all commercial fishermen, who take and land bottomfish in the MHI to submit their fishing reports at the end of each fishing trip, rather than at the end of the month. Electronic file submission of fishing reports is not yet available. Fish dealers who purchase bottomfish directly from commercial fishermen are asked to submit their dealer reports on a weekly or daily basis rather than at the end of the month, if they are able. Electronic file submission is available for dealer reports. DLNR/DAR thanks you in advance for your kokua.

The National Marine Fisheries Service, the State of Hawaii and the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (Council) have developed several informational and educational products related to the implementation of the proposed new MHI bottomfish fishery management regime. These are available on the website dedicated to MHI bottomfish management. The website address is www.hawaiiibottomfish.info. For those who do not have access to the internet, please contact one of the management agencies listed below.

Meetings and informational forums are being scheduled during the coming months. You are encouraged to attend and participate at these forums. Familiarize yourself with the issues and voice your concerns about how the proposed regulations for managing bottomfish could affect you and your fishing. Planned meetings and forums include the following:

- 2007 Hawaii Fishing and Seafood Festival
Sunday October 7, 2007
Pier 38 Honolulu Fishing Village
9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.
Be sure to visit Booth #77 MHI Hawaii Bottomfish exhibit.
For more information on the Festival, visit www.fishtoday.org or call (808) 265-4962.
- Fishermen's Forum
Wednesday October 10, 2007
Pagoda Hotel's C'est Si Bon Room
6:00 to 9:00 P.M.
The forum will focus on non-commercial fishery information, but additional comments and discussions are welcome. The forum is part of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council's 139th meeting.
- 139th Western Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting
Pagoda Hotel's C'est Si Bon Room
Tuesday October 9 to Friday October 12, 2007
The meetings are from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. daily with public comment periods provided through the agenda. For a copy of agenda, visit www.wpcouncil.org or call the Council office at (808) 522-8220.
- Division of Aquatic Resources
Statewide informational meetings for proposed rule amendments to the State bottomfish administrative rules to be announced.

For more information contact the following agencies:

Agencies involved in developing and implementing regulations

National Marine Fisheries Service, Pacific Islands Regional Office:
(808) 944-2200

National Marine Fisheries Service, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center:
(808) 983-5360

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council:
(808) 522-8220

Department of Land & Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources:
(808) 587-0100

Agencies involved in enforcing regulations

National Marine Fisheries Service, Office for Law Enforcement:
(808) 587-2727 or (808) 203-2500

United States Coast Guard, 14th District:
(808) 842-2600

Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Conservation and
Resources Enforcement:
Phone: 643-DLNR (3567) 24 Hour Hotline